

## BOOK REVIEWS

***Computed Tomography of the Brain and Orbit***

Paul F J New and William R Scott. (Pp 486; \$39.50.) Williams and Wilkins. 1975.

Following G N Hounsfield's recent revolutionary discovery of a new application of x-rays to medical diagnosis, the first book on the subject has appeared. The Massachusetts General Hospital, where the work was done, was one of the earliest in the field. That about 400 machines are now installed or on order all over the world in less than three years is some indication of the impact that this advance has made.

This atlas, as it really is, for there is not much text, covers the applications so far made very well. The first section is concerned with the historical background, a general description of the machine, the physical considerations, and the anatomical correlations of the pictures produced. The main part describes the pathological conditions which can be discovered in the brain and orbit. One disappointing feature is that the majority of the patients were also submitted to the whole battery of classical neuroradiological examinations. The greatest virtue of the EMI scanner is that it allows an absolutely safe outpatient examination to be undertaken. The more angiographies and air studies that are prescribed to supplement information before a surgeon is prepared to operate or a physician is satisfied about the diagnosis, the less valuable is the new procedure. The combination of plain x rays, EMI scanning, electroencephalography, and isotope scanning frequently provides adequate information for some surgeons to operate, and this attitude should be encouraged.

Most of the authors' illustrations are on Hounsfield's original matrix. He has made rapid advances since and produced two improvements in picture quality, so that even more structural detail can now be seen. The book is very expensive, and the publishers have been prodigal in leaving large quantities of paper uncovered by illustrations or text. Nevertheless, anyone embarking on this new technique will find the work of great value.

JAMES BULL

***A Wind in Africa***

Pascal James Imperato. (Pp 363; \$12.50.) Warren H Green. 1975.

Dr Imperato, who has a degree in tropical medicine, is an amateur anthropologist, and is fluent in French, volunteered to join the US Public Health Service in lieu of two years' military service. In 1966 he went to Mali to organise a US-financed smallpox eradication scheme and at the same time do some mass vaccination against measles and yellow fever. Despite much frustration and hardship and the development of a renal calculus Dr Imperato

spent, in all, five years in Mali, and in addition to his original project he became involved in a meningococcal meningitis epidemic and a cholera outbreak as well as trying his hand at emergency neurosurgery and other aspects of curative medicine. This book is his account of Mali—its geographical features, its people and their ways of life, its politics (including a coup d'état), and the ideological struggle involving Russians, Chinese, East Germans, Koreans, residual French, and the heavily outnumbered Americans.

Before going out to Mali the author tried to find out something about the country, but in neither the New York public library nor in the Library of Congress could he find a single book on the subject. This gap he has filled with a very readable book for the general public. It is a highly personal story, and doctors would have preferred a fuller account of the medical problems of the country at the expense of the considerable quantity of trivial domestic and anthropological detail. However, the difficulties involved in training vaccinators, dealing with unhelpful administrators and primitive peoples, and moving about under extremely difficult conditions of terrain and climate are vividly described. Over a million people were vaccinated against smallpox and the disease was eradicated; more than a quarter of a million were vaccinated against measles. The chapters on the meningitis and cholera outbreaks are in some ways medically the most interesting. Few British doctors can have experience of Mali, but those who have some knowledge of other parts of Africa will find Dr Imperato's book worth reading from a comparative point of view.

W D FOSTER

***Sexual Options for Paraplegics and Quadriplegics***

Thomas O Mooney, Theodore M Cole, and Richard A Chilgren. (Pp 111; £6.50.) Little, Brown. 1975.

One of the most distressing complications of paraplegia and tetraplegia is the loss of sexual function. It leads to feelings of shame and rejection. There is a dearth of literature on the subject, and what there is consists in anatomical and physiological texts not freely available or comprehensible to the paraplegic patient.

This book fulfils this lack. It explains in simple, undramatic language how paraplegic and tetraplegic patients can satisfy their partners by different means of stimulation. It gives completely explicit directions with copious photographs as to how this can be achieved. Nothing is considered too trivial to be explained; in fact some of the details may reflect the difference in sexual mores between the United States and Britain. Some statements are perhaps too explicit: "A good principle for a man to follow is not to try to force his penis down his partner's throat and thus gag her, but to let her take as much as

she desires into her mouth. Also, if he does not let her keep her head free so she can disengage when she wants, she could get that pinned-down trapped feeling that might turn her off for the next time." It also describes how a woman paraplegic can have intercourse while menstruating and having an indwelling catheter. There is no mention of the danger of developing pressure sores or injuring the partner while having intercourse. Otherwise it is an excellent book which can be thoroughly recommended to anyone who has to advise on this difficult subject.

J R SILVER

***Control of Hospital Infection***

Eds E J L Lowbury, G A J Ayliffe, A M Geddes, and J D Williams. (Pp 306; £8.50.) Chapman and Hall. 1975.

The four named authors of this book are referred to as editors, and a working party of the West Midlands Regional Health Authority with 22 full and 13 co-opted members seems to bear ultimate responsibility. The subjects dealt with are, first, administration and record keeping, then sterilisation by heat and chemicals and cleaning methods, followed by ward and theatre techniques for preventing the spread of infection, the former defining the different uses and types of isolation. The next chapter, mainly on chemotherapy but also including immunisation, describes the properties of all the main antibiotics and their therapeutic use, even including two pages on how to treat tuberculosis, some of which seems outside the scope of the book, but chemoprophylaxis, which is clearly within it, is also covered. Among many useful tables, one states the cost of five days' treatment with different antibacterial drugs, ranging from 15p for penicillin V and 20p for sulphadimidine to £27 for cephalothin, £52 for vancomycin, and £77 for albeit much larger doses of carbenicillin. There is a chapter on the care of the health of hospital staff, and a final and most useful one on precautions in special departments, including units for intensive care, haemodialysis, and renal transplantation. But the section on maternity departments inexplicably omits any reference to the prevention of gonococcal ophthalmia neonatorum for which the simple measures required are among the most valuable ever devised. Much is made of how to cope with a suspected case of smallpox. As the WHO claims that this disease is on the verge of extinction, even in Bangladesh, may future editions safely omit this?

All the instructions given are full, dogmatic, and expressed in simple language for the benefit of those among eight categories mentioned as potential users who may be unfamiliar with some medical terms. Faithful adherence to these admirable and detailed instructions should prevent a lot of avoidable infection and so obviate the expense, often computed in millions, of extended hospital stay. An estimate of the cost of these often lavish precautions

themselves would be interesting. It must take into account extra staff, an ever-increasing range of "disposables"—and if bedpans are included the machinery for disposing of them—largely increased facilities for laundering and sterilisation, and far more work in bacteriology departments. If the expense thus entailed must be reduced, a better general understanding of the problem, to which this book will contribute, may perhaps enable the precautions taken to be simplified.

L P GARROD

### ***A Short Practice of Clinical Psychiatry***

Russell Barton. (Pp 413; £12.00.) John Wright. 1975.

Those who know Dr Russell Barton well will hardly be surprised to discover just how much his own highly individual personality is reflected in this book. Evidence of his outspokenness, his no-nonsense attitude, a tendency to be somewhat dogmatic, occasionally reinforced by hyperbole, are all here. His approach to psychiatry is unequivocally clinical and down to earth. Symptoms and signs are paramount—but why not? Each chapter begins with an illustration of a chart for systematising the evidence in favour (or not, presumably) of whatever psychiatric condition is under consideration; this is followed by useful instructions on how such symptoms and signs are to be elicited and evaluated. The approach is unashamedly practical, and, despite a surprisingly old-fashioned digression at one juncture into Freudian dream symbolism, the author avoids vague and speculative theorising. Thus in dealing with depression he tells the reader, but only somewhat curtly in a footnote, that the cause of this disorder is unknown. In contrast and later in the same chapter some 8 or 9 pages are given over to a detailed description of the technique of administering electric convulsion therapy.

In some ways this is a kind of psychiatric cook-book, a do-it-yourself manual, an impression strongly reinforced by the endpapers. The book almost seems to have been written for readers who, wishing to draw upon the author's undoubtedly wide experience, may not care to think too deeply for themselves. He even includes a list of recommended charges per hour for psychotherapy according to the experience and qualifications of the would-be psychotherapist and, elsewhere, a detailed list of the clothing that both male and female schizophrenic patients require (name tabs and all) which should be obtained, we are told, "from a hospital shop set out like a ladies' fashion shop in a local High Street." Somehow, somewhere, and concealed behind all this more or less useful information, the book seems to conjure up here and there the phantom of the alienist walking the wards and—and this is recommended more than once—bribing his patients by the judicious offer of a cigarette to divest themselves of some particularly fascinating psychopathological morsel. Although the book is in some respects remarkably comprehensive and contains chapters on the psychiatry of old age, mental deficiency, and the law, nothing whatsoever is said of child psychiatry other than in an eight-line paragraph headed "Family Therapy"—surely a surprising omission in this day and age.

A passing curiosity is that the term "stereotypy" is spelt "stereotopy." This occurs on all three occasions the word appears in the text and also in the index, so cannot be regarded as a mere misprint. While there may be some precedent for spelling the word this way, reference to seven medical dictionaries and a number of psychiatric textbooks disclosed no other similar instance. It is a trivial matter, perhaps, but possibly a further hallmark of Dr Barton's individuality.

W H TRETHOWAN

### ***Obesity***

Ed J T Silverstone. (Pp 240; £8.50.) Medical and Technical Publishing. 1975.

The morbidity and mortality caused directly or indirectly by obesity are unknown, and certainly do not receive the recognition they merit. Who last wrote "obesity" as the primary cause of death on a death certificate? Any book on this topic is welcome and this one particularly so. But do not expect to find within its pages the answer to either the pathogenesis or effective treatment. This would be asking too much.

In essence the book is a collection of review articles on different aspects of obesity ranging from physiological considerations and epidemiological surveys through experimental psychology to treatment by diet, behavioural therapy, and anorectic drugs. There is some repetition, and the mix is uneven, but this is not unexpected because the editor's declared aim is to act "in the spirit of an art collector" and to be selective rather than comprehensive.

The problems in the management of obesity are squarely faced. "Anyone who has dealt with obese patients is depressingly aware of the failure of any one treatment to lead to significant and sustained weight loss in all but a small number of cases" (p 155). To the clinician the chapter by Dr A N Howard, which covers more ground than its declared title "Dietary Treatment of Obesity", is perhaps the most informative. The roles of exercise and group therapy are given brief but essential mention. So much seems to depend on the individual therapist's ability to motivate the patient, but the therapist cannot be rigid in his approach because each obese patient has an individual reason for his obesity despite the obvious fact that his caloric intake is greater than his metabolic needs. Restrictions of staff and time often make individually tailored treatment impossible, but as a profession we should find out why slimming clubs and related lay organisations (admittedly with scientific advisers of the highest standing) often achieve a higher and more sustained success rate than we do.

R I S BAYLISS

### ***Hematology: Physiologic, Pathophysiologic, and Clinical Principles***

James W Linman. (Pp 1055; £21.00.) Baillière Tindall. 1976.

A well-stocked medical library used to boast three or four books on haematology. The last decade has witnessed an explosion of books on many aspects of this expanding subject, with monographs on specific topics by the

score and general textbooks by the dozen. With the advent of yet another textbook it becomes necessary to assess its need as well as its worth. Dr J W Linman is head of the division of haematology and director of the Osgood memorial centre for leukaemia research of the University of Oregon health sciences centre. The present book is expanded from his earlier publication, *Principles of Haematology*; it is intended to provide general physicians with a clinically orientated basis for an understanding of haematology.

The subject matter is set out in 20 chapters. There are two introductory chapters on the blood cells and examination of the blood and blood-forming organs, followed by other chapters in fairly traditional order on the anaemias; leucocytes, leukaemias, and related diseases; hypersplenism; haemorrhagic disorders; and blood groups and transfusion. The first chapter provides a lucid review of the morphology, biochemistry, and physiology of blood cells, and throughout this and subsequent chapters there are numerous excellent illustrative black-and-white photomicrographs and electron micrographs. There are in addition two colour plates showing various cells from bone-marrow aspirates, but these reproductions are of variable quality, which ranges from good to awful; the book would not have been the poorer without them.

A chapter on monoclonal gammopathies has been contributed by R A Kyle and E D Bayrd. For the rest the book represents an awesome labour by a single author, and in its class it is remarkable against the present trend to multi-authorship. There is a tendency to didacticism, and on occasions the presentation reflects a personal viewpoint with which others might take issue. Thus, for example, it is not clear why the congenital dyserythropoietic anaemias are included in the chapter on megaloblastic anaemias and why no reference is made to the wider implications of ineffective erythropoiesis and dyserythropoiesis. Nor is it clear why the subject of erythropoiesis is made even more complicated than need be by the introduction of a new terminology for the erythroid series: proerythroblasts are termed rubriblasts, while early, intermediate, and late normoblasts are referred to as prorubricytes, rubricytes, and metarubricytes respectively.

These are, however, minor points of detail. Dr Linman writes with clarity, and with the help of good typographical layout, clear type, and useful tables he provides a lucid account of the subject. Whether this publication will become one of the standard textbooks in the English language is debatable. Although the bibliography is adequate enough to provide key reference to most topics, it is selective, and as far as the specialist haematologist is concerned its use as a reference source is limited, especially by comparison with the better known "big" books. The non-specialist will find it more than adequate for his purpose, but at a relatively high price, even by today's criteria.

S M LEWIS

### **SELECTED TITLES**

**Clinical pathology.** 23rd edn. Ed Ronald H Girdwood. (Pp 549; £5.50.) Baillière Tindall. 1976.

**Moral Dilemmas in Medicine.** 2nd edn. A V Campbell. (Pp 212; £1.95.) Churchill Livingstone. 1975.